

Remarks

Reconsideration of the application is requested. In response to the Office action, applicants have amended several claims, canceled others, and added new claims 25-34. Based on the amendments and following remarks, applicants submit that the pending claims are patentable over the cited art.

Claim 1 as amended recites control logic that is "operable, in response to an output signal from an analog monitor circuit, to generate a ramp control signal that gradually turns on the FET driver circuit." Support for this claim language (and the claim language noted below) is found throughout the specification, including within the paragraph at application page 7, line 30 through page 8, line 10.

Henze neither discloses nor suggests control logic capable of generating such a ramp control signal. Rather, Henze employs a flip flop 60 whose output 63 flips between "set" and "reset" binary logic states. See col. 4, lines 18-30. Nor is there any indication in Henze that its driver circuit 64 is an FET driver circuit capable of being turned on gradually.

Claim 6 adds to claim 1 the limitation that "the control logic is programmable to generate a plurality of respective ramp control signals to turn on [a plurality of] FET driver circuits in a programmed sequence." Henze lacks this capability. Despite the Examiner's statement, applicants can find nothing in Henze to suggest that the its flip flop 60 is programmable. The Examiner is asked to point to evidence supporting his statement if this claim is again rejected on this basis.

Claim 14 adds to claim 1 the limitation of "nonvolatile programmable memory operable to store information for configuring the control logic." Note that this nonvolatile memory is integrated within the claimed power management integrated circuit. Kunz, on which the Examiner relied to initially reject this claim, discloses a discrete nonvolatile memory 150 that is part of a larger circuit 24 that includes of a number of discrete devices. Kunz thus does not teach or suggest this limitation.

Claim 25 adds to claim 1 the limitation that "the control logic is operable to provide a plurality of selectable ramp control signals that vary in the rate at which they turn on the FET driver circuit." Applicants see nothing in Henze or the other cited art that discloses or suggests control logic that provides selectable ramp control signals.

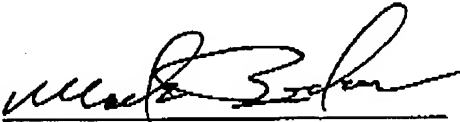
New claims 27-34 contain combinations of the above novel limitations and are believed patentable over the prior art for at least the same reasons.

Applicants therefore believe that the application is now in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Please call the undersigned if he can be of any further assistance in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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